

Participation

Lake Louise message reaches 13,000 Canadians

The first stage of the Lake Louise Development planning study is now complete. The planning consultants initial report, Discussion Paper, June 1978, was summarized in volume two of *Participation*. Public comments on the ideas put forward in this paper have been considered as the planning proceeds.

Syd Moore, public participation coordinator, described the public participation program during the first stage as an "introduction to the project and an information exchange period." Mr. Moore feels that the early involvement of the public in the Lake Louise study has been "most successful."

More than 13,000 persons have been contacted across Canada through the newsletter, *Participation* through public meetings with interested groups and individuals, visitations to the storefront in Lake Louise and through the display program.

The aim of the Lake Louise display program has been to reach as many members of the Canadian public, particularly those who use and are interested in national parks, and those especially interested in the Lake Louise area. The display has been exhibited at national conferences held in Western Canada whose delegates represented a variety of user or interest groups of the park. The conferences attended include the Western Regional Conference on Wilderness and Wildlands in Calgary; the Sixth Commonwealth Conference on Sport Physical Education and Recreation in Edmonton; the Canadian Parks and Recreation Conference in Vancouver; the Canadian Chamber of Commerce annual meeting in Halifax; the Western Canada Conference on Integration in Recreation at Edmonton; the Canadian National Parks: Today and Tomorrow Conference II: Ten Years Later, held in Banff and the Canadian Association on Gerontology Conference conducted in Edmonton.

The display at the Canadian Chamber of Commerce annual meeting in Halifax was a joint effort between Parks Canada's Atlantic and Western Regions.

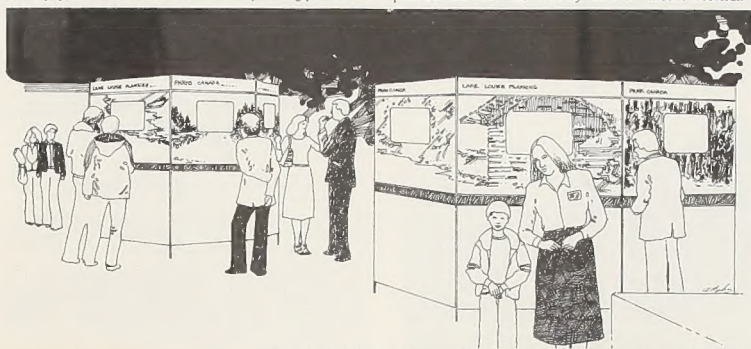
The general public also had the opportunity to view the display and receive information about the project when it was exhibited at various shopping malls in Alberta and B.C. These included the Pacific Centre Mall in Vancouver; North Hill Shopping Centre, Market Mall Shopping Centre, Chinook Centre Shopping Mall in Calgary; Lethbridge Centre Mall in Lethbridge; Parkland Mall in Red Deer and Southgate Mall in Edmonton.

The display program ran from April to mid-October.

Public comments received by the people manning the display included interest and concern about transportation and how it circulates, services to be provided for day visitors, environmental concerns about the backcountry; the relationship between the visitor centre and the ski facility, the CP Rail grade improvement and extra track, and housing and services for residents.

Many were particularly interested in information regarding national parks policy; and the stated objectives and purpose of Canada's National Parks.

One day during the display program in Vancouver, visitors from the United States, a family from Sweden, another from Australia, a couple from New Zealand and a Japanese delegation on a Canadian tour all stopped at the display. They along with most Canadian citizens who visited the display, approved and encouraged the continuation of citizen involvement in the planning and management of Canada's National Parks.



Lake Louise display program exhibited at National Conferences and shopping malls in Western Canada.

PPAC terms public review program "valuable"

The Public Participation Advisory Committee feels the public has made an important contribution to the planning program. This is reflected in the public input chart sent to those on the mailing list in December 1978. Comments and suggestions shown on the chart were received from over 3000 individuals or groups. All of the comments received have been passed on to the appropriate Parks Canada staff and the consultants for consideration in the planning program.

The committee feels the public input chart will help people compare their concerns with those made by others. It should be a helpful guide for assessing the options and alternatives presented in the interim report.

After public review during the second stage, a revised public input chart will be prepared prior to the preparation of recommendations for the final report. The committee would like to stress the importance of public review during this stage when the planning alternatives are being presented; they indicate the degree and expectations envisioned for the development and management of the Lake Louise area.

Membership of the committee has fluctuated since the program started. Mr. Dennis Anderson and Mr. Len Laughlin

resigned from the committee. Mr. Laughlin was transferred from the area and Mr. Anderson's other commitments prevented him from devoting as much time as he wanted on this project. Mr. Dave Gauthier is presently acting on the committee in an ex officio capacity because he is working now in Kluane National Park.

Dr. Hodgetts, chairman of the PPAC announced that two additional members from Calgary have been appointed to the committee—Mr. Frank Doucette and Mr. Bill Milne. Others who have been with the committee since its organization last January and who continue to contribute as members are Dr. Elsie McFarland, Ms. Valerie Blakely and Mr. Cliff White.

Winter visitors offered opportunity.

Winter visitors to Banff National Park will now get their opportunity to become involved in the Lake Louise re-development plans. Joanne Langham, the storefront operator, is travelling to the ski areas and hotels in Banff and Lake Louise to meet the winter public.

Last summer, Lake Louise experienced one of its busiest visitor seasons and the public participation storefront operation connected with the planning program shared in the activity.

Mount Fairview slide threat delays interim report

In the second volume of *Participation*, Parks Canada promised that the consultant's interim report would be completed and made available to the public in November.

A final report was to have been completed by December 31.

However, additional studies were necessary to investigate the soil characteristics in some areas on Mt. Fairview which had been previously identified as having a potential to slide and have been monitored since 1973.

Measurements of the landslide area in August, 1978 produced uncertain results which confirmed a need and justification for further studies. The uncertainty of the hazard prompted the Environmental Advisory Panel to recommend that land

use alternatives not be evaluated until more information about the potential slide was available. Accordingly, the planning program was slowed to provide time to perform tests at the slide site.

Test holes were drilled and logged; depth to bedrock and subsurface stratigraphy were determined; and water levels in the overburden and other pertinent data were recorded.

"Although it will never be possible to define the hazard in a precise fashion, information adequate to evaluate risk and compare the merits of land use alternatives was collected," explained Dr. B. Leeson, chief environmental officer for Parks Canada, Western Region.

The release of the consultant's interim report has therefore been delayed until now. The final report will not be ready until the interim report has been reviewed by the public and Parks Canada. The results of the landslide study have been incorporated into the planning program. These results dictated the need to review some of the alternatives that were previously available involving further development on the valley floor. The interim report reflects these results and presents the viable alternatives for public review.

Paul Lange, superintendent of Banff National Park, conceded that "while a delay in planning is annoying," it is essential in view of the serious implications. "We believe that the planning alternatives which remain are broad and continue to offer viable options for a sound plan for a Visitor Centre."

Policy restricts downhill ski development

A policy to guide downhill ski area planning and development in the mountain national parks was issued by Parks Canada in 1975. This policy statement followed detailed consideration of public comment received in 1971 and 1972 at hearings held on the park master plans and the Village Lake Louise Ltd. proposals.

The five page policy statement available on request from Parks Canada, 134-11th Avenue, S.E., Calgary, Alberta, T2G 0X5; attention Jim Rouse, coordinator of ski area planning programs, contains these highlights:

"Major development of downhill skiing facilities in the Mountain National Parks will be limited to the areas known as Sunshine, Mt. Norquay, Lake Louise and Marmot Basin."

"Each area will be planned and allowed to develop to a scale that optimizes the recreational skiing potential, in harmony with the natural environment."

The policy statement recognizes downhill skiing as a legitimate activity in the mountain national parks. "But, as with any form of development or use of these parks, finite limits must be placed on the amount of parklands devoted to an activity, because the park boundaries are finite," said Mr. Jim Rouse.

With the Sunshine area near Banff townsite as the forerunner, Parks Canada has been progressing toward finalization of

official plans for each of the four ski areas. Concurrent with the overall program of planning for visitor services in the Lake Louise area is a joint Parks Canada—Village Lake Louise Ltd. program designed to prepare guidelines for the future of the skiing operation.

Before the policy statement on downhill ski areas was prepared, the four established operations in the mountain national parks had been expanding in a general response to skier demands and economic feasibility.

Popularity of downhill skiing has increased continuously since the 1950s. In the mountain national parks patronage has doubled itself every five years and there are no indications that growth pressures will disappear. Clearly, the ski areas cannot expand indefinitely and jeopardize other interests in the national parks.

The key control established to limit the size of the ski areas rests in formalizing the boundaries. When long range plans have been prepared that meet the policy criteria of optimizing the recreational potential within accepted environmental constraints, a boundary around the ski area is worked out with the ski area management. The boundary is formalized by a legal survey and incorporated in the lease and licence documents covering the operation of the ski area.

Many ideas and proposals have been tabled for the Lake

Louise ski area during the last 10 years. For a variety of reasons none of these plans have been fully accepted by Parks Canada or the management of Village Lake Louise Ltd.

The new ski area proposals now being prepared are intended to complement the overall program of planning for visitor services at Lake Louise. These proposals are expected to be tabled this winter and will be drawn largely from the ideas contained in previous studies of the area.

The general area for consideration of lift and slope development is based on a Parks Canada study prepared by Dr. Bruce Leeson entitled "An Environmental Study for Boundary Delineation." This general area has been the subject of further study with an Initial Environmental Evaluation (IEE) being prepared by Dr. B. Leeson.

The IEE will detail environmental constraints and hazards against which the proposals for lift and slope development can be assessed. The resulting official plan for the Lake Louise ski area will be an optimization of the various considerations that have been described above.

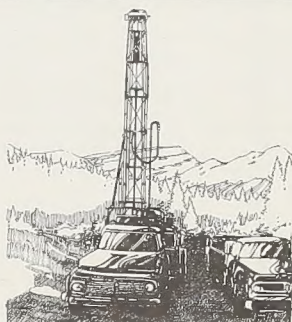
As various documents and reports are prepared, members of the public who have shown interest will be invited to review and comment on the material. Constructive criticism will be welcomed by both Parks Canada and the management of Village Lake Louise Ltd.

Environment statement major planning factor

The Lake Louise development planning studies have been registered with the Federal Environment Assessment and Review Process (EARP). EARP was established by cabinet in December, 1973 to provide a method of reviewing the environmental impact of federal projects. Concurrent with the planning studies, Parks Canada is preparing a separate environmental document called an Initial Environmental Evaluation (IEE) which will be available about the same time as completion of the planning studies. This document will contain an evaluation of the effects which the proposed development may have on the environment and recommendations on how to reduce any adverse impacts.

Studies to prepare the IEE and assist in the land use planning at Lake Louise have proceeded in a number of disciplines. A noise pollution analysis has been completed, and it shows that many areas in the valley bottom have significant noise annoyance problems. These intrusions can be minimized by adopting special building construction techniques and by avoiding the need for train whistles through the elimination of the level crossing.

The Banff wand service has completed an interim report which describes the findings in a study on the mountain goat population. The mountainous area on both sides of the Ptarmigan Valley between the ski area and Skoki Lodge is prime mountain goat habitat. A healthy population of several



Drilling rig used during land stability studies on Mount Fairview—see story on page 1.

dozen goats is present throughout the area. Their range changes in response to season and snow depth. An important, heavily-used mineral lick has been discovered.

A review of grizzly bear records and a preliminary examination of habitat indicates that good quality grizzly range exists in the countryside extending from the ski area. Special consideration directed at avoiding intrusion into this habitat, and minimizing the potential for conflict with humans will be necessary.

Louise program entering critical stage—Hodgetts

With the release of the consultant's interim report, a second review period by the public and Parks Canada starts.

"This is the most critical stage of the planning program for Lake Louise," said Dr. Ross Hodgetts, chairman of the Public Participation Advisory Committee.

The interim report outlines specific alternatives. During this review period, public participation sessions will be held in a number of centres in Western Canada. The public is encouraged to review the alternatives, gather additional information at the public sessions and submit any comments they wish to make. All submissions will be reviewed before the final recommendations are formulated by the consultants and presented in their final report.

The public will be invited to forward written submissions to Parks Canada after the final report is released. Since there will be no public sessions following the final report, the importance of your involvement in reviewing the interim report is emphasized.

The public sessions will be carried out in five or six centres—Edmonton, Calgary, Banff/Lake Louise, Red Deer, Vancouver and possibly Regina. The program is expected to begin with a press conference followed by a two or three day open house where people can obtain more detailed information or clarification of the proposals and offer any suggestions.

During the open house mini-workshops (small working groups to discuss particular aspects of the planning program in detail) will be conducted. Each session will conclude with a public discussion on the evening of the last day. The planning consultants will be present for these discussions to receive suggestions and recommendations and to respond to questions. Local newspapers will carry the exact time and place of these public sessions.

Thousands of visitors were interviewed to obtain needed statistics on the origin, needs and preferences of the visitor. The survey results will form a base for similar surveys conducted in the future. Future surveys would identify statistical changes which may prove to be invaluable to Parks Canada in identifying priorities and making necessary adjustments to the plan.

A detailed housing study published by the land use consultant looks at the needs of employees and suggests ways that housing may be provided.

A study on existing services (sanitary sewers, water system and storm drainage) was published by the utilities consultant in July. Drilling and testing for a new water supply well in the lower valley area was completed in September.

These and other studies form the background material used in the interim report which outlines the development options and consequences of development.

As seen in the public input chart, a wide range of preferences have been expressed about the program. It must be realized, therefore, that not all the ideas expressed will be included in the planning studies. Eugene Gillespie, Lake Louise program manager said "that it is important for interested people to put forward their ideas about the alternatives outlined in the interim report so that the final report will reflect the best positive thinking of the public and the consultants."

Business views important, says Supt. Lange

Paul Lange, Superintendent of Banff National Park, says "solutions to existing problems in Lake Louise are of special interest to the park staff."

The superintendent said the park's interpretive program employing the "multiplier effect" (interpretive information passed on to visitors through businesses and by other visitors) was initiated in the Lake Louise area last summer.

"Our efforts were modest but I understand that the returns were excellent in view of the effort expended."

"Parks Canada will need to cooperate with business people in the field of interpretation if we are to serve the visitor to the best advantage on how to enjoy the Lake Louise area," he said.

Lange said, "all hurdles have been cleared for the commencement of the grade reduction project of the CP Railway line at Lake Louise."

"A meeting has been convened of the Supervisory Committee on which there is representation from the Canadian Transport Commission, CP Rail, Department of Environment, and Parks Canada at the regional and park levels. Dr. B. Leeson and I are the Parks Canada representatives on the committee."

"Permission has been given to the CPR to occupy sites as recommended in the Slaney Environmental Report for a survey camp and a work crew camp. Authority has also been granted for the CPR to occupy an abandoned borrow pit on the south end of the Icefield Parkway to serve as a work area," Lange said.

The portions of the project CPR are working on this winter include the removal of their wye track from Lake Louise and

the construction of a new wye track at Eldon, approximately 15 km east of the Visitor Centre. A crossing of the Bow River near the Jasper turnoff will be started.

Meetings to establish guidelines for work carried out are being held and the superintendent anticipates that the Supervisory Committee will meet periodically to ensure that the environmental standards are met to the satisfaction of Parks Canada and the Department of Environment.

"The CTC has given assurance that their approvals will be contingent on satisfactory standards being met by the CPR in the submission of plans and in construction," Lange said.

"I am looking forward to the next round of public participation, not only to bring the Lake Louise planning program to a conclusion but also to learn more about how—in an operating sense—we can improve our service to the public in the Lake Louise area," Mr. Lange said.

Thousands questioned about visitor concerns

The interim report is the result of information provided by technical studies produced by the consultants, environmental studies, and input from the public.

The technical studies include a traffic survey and a report completed by the transportation consultant which outlines existing traffic problems and assesses various transportation modes.

The land use consultant completed a survey of summer visitors conducted over a 10-day period at the end of July.